SCIENCE:

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF ALL THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

PUBLISHED BY

N. D. C. HODGES,

47 LAFAYETTE PLACE, NEW YORK.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—United States and Canada..... $3.50 a year.

Great Britain and Europe..... 4.50 a year.

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Attention is called to the "Wants" column. All are invited to use it in soliciting information or seeking new positions. The name and address of applicants should be given in full, so that answers will go direct to them. The "Exchange" column is likewise open.

VOL. XV. NEW YORK, JUNE 6, 1890. No. 383.

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CORNELL AND THE LOST WILL.

THE newspapers are publishing the customary type of absurd stories about the history and loss of the great bequest of Mrs Jennie McGraw Fiske, which has just been lost to Cornell University through the operation of a technicality in law, and the active exertions of her surviving husband and of the next of kin, who brought suit to secure what they, and all the world, knew that they were not given by the deceased owner of the property. The true history of the case in brief, as we obtain it from a reliable source, is the following:—

John McGraw was, at the time of his death, an old lumberman who had made an enormous fortune in the North-west, working in company with Henry W. Sage, Hiram Sibley, and a few other equally successful comrades and friends. He was a friend and fellow trustee with Ezra Cornell at the founding of Cornell University, and took great interest in that now great institution of learning. He contributed largely to its treasury and needs, in its early days, and finally died with fortune unimpaired, leaving it mainly to his only child, Jennie. Miss McGraw had grown up in the midst of the little circle of wealthy and liberal men who did so much to make the university what it is, and from them (for she was intimate with all) had received her inspiration. When her father built what is now known as McGraw Hall, the largest building of the dozen scattered over the great campus, the child asked the privilege of contributing the beautiful chime of bells which now hangs in its tower, and calls the students to their daily tasks. This interest she never lost: it increased, rather than decreased with time.

Miss McGraw, a few years before her death, lost her health, and remained in a critical condition to the end. Meantime she had made the acquaintance of the librarian of the university, Professor Fiske, and after a time, becoming interested in each other, they were married, and the professor took his bride to Europe in the vain hope that her health might be restored. She failed steadily, and finally returned with her husband to her home on the university campus, to die. Her death took place within a few days of their return.

Meantime, under her directions, a large and beautiful house had been built on a commanding site between the university and the bank of Cayuga Lake, which was never occupied; the couple living, in the interval, in a modest little cottage, still standing within the university grounds. A pre-nuptial contract had been entered into between the affianced pair, by which Mrs. Fiske was permitted to dispose of her millions as she might choose, and which provided properly for her husband in case of her death. At her death it was found that a will had also been made, giving liberally to the natural heirs, and leaving her husband $300,000 and personal property. The university was given $40,000 to found a hospital; and the residue of the estate, now amounting to nearly two millions of dollars, after paying legacies, was to be devoted to the building and endowment of a library for the university. All legacies were promptly paid by the executor, and the balance of the estate was in process of conversion into the university treasury, when suit was brought by the husband to break the will,—a suit in which he was presently joined by the heirs, to whom, as well as to the husband, liberal legacies had been paid.

It appeared that a clause existed in the charter of the university, limiting its holdings of property to a gross amount of $3,000,000. This had been inserted in the document at the first, and had never been removed, although it must have been known that the holdings were approaching perilously near this limit. The plaintiffs in the case asserted that the university already possessed so nearly this amount—above $2,000,000, as they stated—that it was legally debarred from accepting the gift of Mrs. Fiske; and the property must therefore go to the next of kin. The trustees and the executor of the will, as defendants, asserted that this was not the fact, the property inventoried including large amounts held in trust for the State, and not the property of the university, though its income was pledged to the university for educational purposes. Other and technical defences were raised by the defendants. No one, on either side, claimed or admitted that there was any question of the intent of the testatrix; no one disputed the fact that she had desired and intended to give her property to the university, and that no one else had the slightest moral right to it. The question was simply and solely whether a technical interpretation of the laws affecting the holding of property could be made to give to others what they had no moral claim upon, and to take from the university, and to deflect from its great purpose, a gift of enormous value and potential usefulness, which was morally the absolute property of the institution, and pledged to the specified purpose.

The Surrogate's Court decided in favor of the university: the higher courts of the State, and the Supreme Court of the United States, reversed the finding, and gave the property to the claimants. They now hold it, though every one gaining by the transaction is fully aware that the deceased, if conscious of what is going on here below, must feel that her intent has been defeated; that they have no real right to her property; that the intent must always stand a moral bar to their receiving the money for any other purpose than to carry into effect her intention, defeated as it is, for the moment at least, by the operation of an unexpected legal impediment.

The amount involved approaches $2,000,000; but legal expenses, and losses in realizing on the property, may bring the net sum below a million and a half. Had this great fund gone into the hands of the trustees of the university, it would have founded perhaps the noblest library on the American continent. As it is, it may be seriously questioned whether it is likely to do much good, even to the legal but yet false inheritors. The daily papers